

resources that diabolic deceit, brutal cynicism, cold-blooded indifference to suffering, could lend him. In these respects he might stand as the original of Machiavelli's " Prince," to whom everything is permitted for State ends, State ends being in this case the supremacy of Spain and the vindication of Holy Church. To those of the magnates who had not the sagacity of William, to Egmont and Horn in particular, there was vouchsafed for a short time much show of benignity. It was abruptly terminated by their arrest at the conclusion of a council at Alva's residence at Brussels. For the trial of these, and all delinquents accused of treason, he established his Council of Troubles, more fitly named the Council of Blood, one of the most arbitrary and bloodthirsty courts in the history of despotism. Its function was to try all accused of any share in the late troubles. Its powers were absolute. It was limited by no law ; it was superior to charter or privilege ; the charge of treason was so comprehensive that not a soul that had taken any part, directly or indirectly, in the history of the previous seven years, in opposition to the Government, could possibly escape death. Of this monstrous tribunal Alva was president; Del Rio and De Vargas, other two Spaniards, the most influential members. Among the Netherlander who distinguished themselves by consenting to be the tools of the president, Noircarmes, Berlaymont, and Hessels were the most conspicuous. Its inauguration in the autumn of 1567 was the beginning of a reign of terror comparable in method and brutality to that of revolutionary France fully two centuries later, though lasting far longer. For several years the procession of victims to the scaffold, or the gallows, or the stake, was unceasing. Alva did not hesitate to strike off the heads of such prominent magnates as Egmont and Horn. He outlawed Orange and other absentee nobles, and Philip secretly despatched Montigny, whom he sentenced to death, *in absentia*, in a Spanish dungeon. The victims of lesser rank or of no rank were executed in batches. From hundreds the number soon mounted up to thousands. There is no danger of exaggerating the figures, for Alva himself testified to the frightful volume of blood, yea, gloried in his *role* of butcher. There was indeed ample latitude of selection, and after the ferocious decree of the Inquisition denouncing death to all the